

# Good afternoon

30th COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONFERENCE  
OF DIRECTORS OF PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICES  
(CDPPS)

"Can we move away from the overuse of penal sanctions?"  
(Kraków, Poland, 24-25 September 2025)

**WORKSHOP 3: Children with imprisoned parents**

**bambinisenzasbarre**



## WHO WE ARE

- **Bambinisenzasbarre** is a 25-year old Third Sector organisation operating inside and outside **Italy**.
- **Bambinisenzasbarre** is a **COPE**'s member organization and sits in its Board.





## WHERE WE ARE

The Bambinisenzasbarre headquarters is **in Milan**.

It is **property confiscated from organised crime** and assigned to Bambinisenzasbarre through a call for proposals. To date, the following are being pursued:

- Psycho-pedagogical counselling for **children and families following the arrest of a family member and for the detainee**.
- Confidential father-child talks
- Workshops, cultural events, conferences, meetings.

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## OUR VISION

The rights of adults  
begin  
with children's rights.





*by Rosya, 5-year-old*

## OUR MISSION

1. To maintain and strengthen the **parent-child emotional bond** during detention
2. To recognise this bond as a **fundamental right of the child** and for social cohesion.
3. **To mediate between prison and territory**, promoting parental responsibility.
4. Building with the prison institution **models** for guaranteeing children's rights and inclusion.
5. **To sensitise society** to the rights enshrined in international conventions.





## OUR FOUNDING VALUES

- Inclusion
- Safeguarding
- Fairness
- Respect for legality
- Centrality of the children's voice in our daily action.





## OUR INTERVENTION

1. Supporting family **relationships** in prison.
2. **Protecting** children.
3. **Safeguarding** affectivity.
4. **Reducing risks** of school drop-out, deviance, unemployment and recidivism among children of prisoners, with a **social prevention** intervention.
5. Helping parents maintain a **positive educational role**.
6. Contributing to a more **inclusive community**.
7. Creating **intervention models**.

I'm going to end up in prison too

just because my dad's there

you're wrong if you think

there are other possibilities for me

I know

the criminal

[Click here >>>](#)

**REVERSIBLE  
THINKING**





# THE SCENARIO

*a 25-year journey - Proliferation of our actions in Italy*  
*Working inside and outside prisons, because children are outside and inside prisons.*

## MILESTONES

**1996** – San Vittore, prison in Milan, Italy - Conference entitled "Bambini senza sbarre" (Children without bars), the name that would become that of the association.

**2002-2005** – Creation of the **Association Bambinisenzasbarre** and **2005-2008** – Project "Relais Italia", supported and financed by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

since **2007** – The **Yellow Space**, starting in **San Vittore Milan Prison**, reaching out prisons of the Lombardy Region.

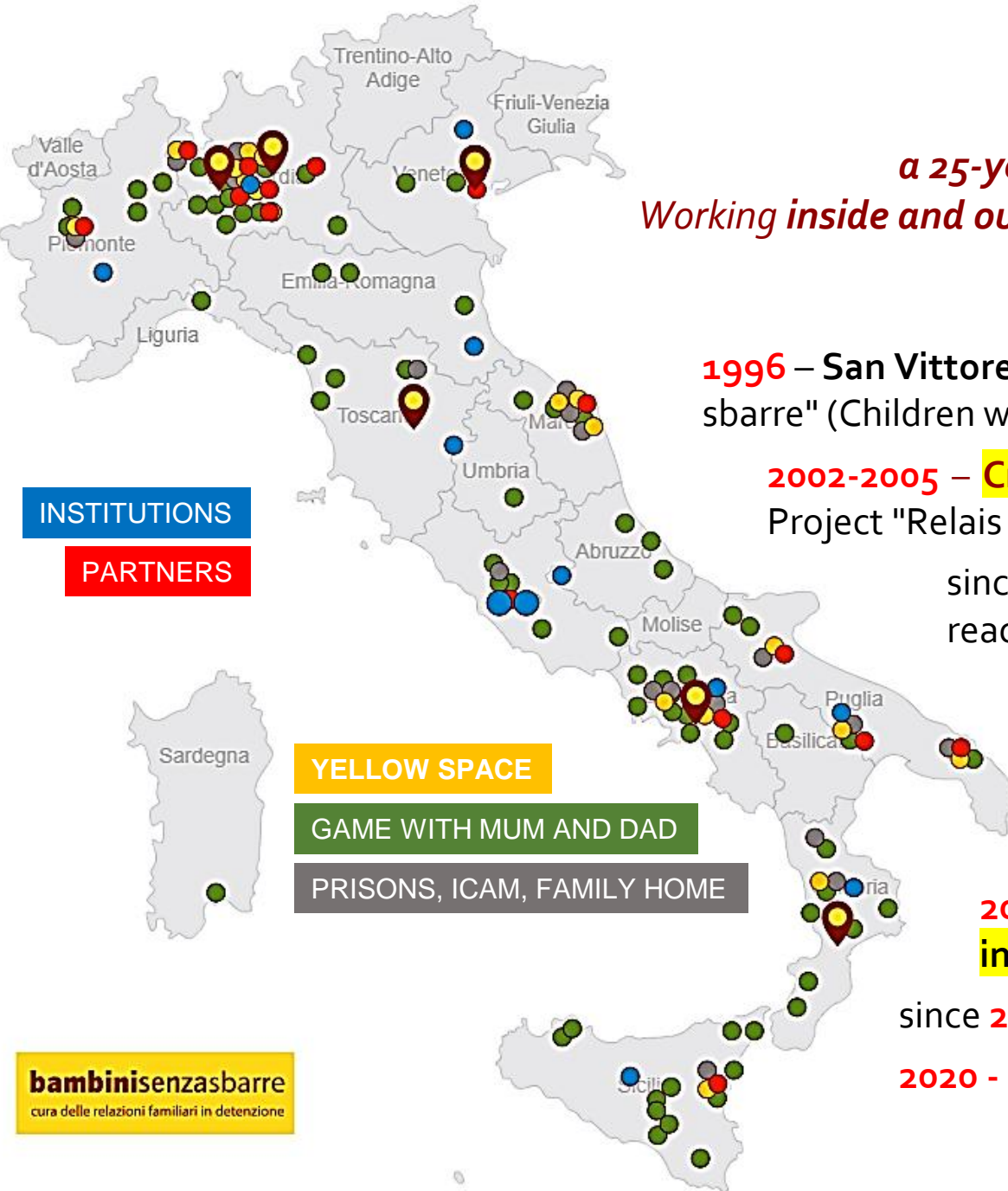
since **2008** – Partnerships with the **Ministry of Justice - Department of Penitentiary Administration** and **Guarantor Authority for Childhood and Adolescence**.

since **2013** – "Yellow Space System" in Italian prisons.

**2014 - 2025** – Signature of "Charter of the rights of the child of imprisoned parents".

since **2017** – Bambinisenzasbarre **network**.

**2020 - 2026** – National *Charter* implementation project.



**bambinisenzasbarre**  
cura delle relazioni familiari in detenzione

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# THE SCENARIO

*a 25-year journey - Proliferation of our actions in **Europe***

*Working inside and outside prisons, 'cause **children are outside and inside prisons***

## MILESTONES

since **2002** – COPE (former Eurochips)

**2008-2010** – Child Bond - Grundtvig Project – with **France, UK, Belgium**

**2010-2011** – Child Ties – Danish Institute for Human Rights w **Poland, Scotland**

since **2007** – CRC-Convention Group on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent, coordinated by **Save the Children**.

since **2010** – Represents in Italy the training school **Ecole Relais Enfants Parents – Paris**

**2011** – 1st intl. Conference on 'Children of Incarcerated Parents' by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at the UN's in **Geneva**.

since **2015** – **Consultative Member of the UN** – Geneva

**2023-2025** – COPE > GWMD Model creator and executive partner of GWMD (in Italy since 2015).

**2024-2026** – Child Trust project - Erasmus+ – with **Poland, Croatia, France**.

**2025-2027** – Child Chart project – CERV – with **Portugal, Romania, France**.

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## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

### 1 st LEVEL

Work in prison  
in expansion

*We share and  
contaminate*





## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

**1st LEVEL** Work in prison in expansion  
*We share and contaminate*

- We work in and out the Italian prisons with **15 different actions/projects** of ours, self-financed, directly and/or with our **network of partners**.
- Some of these actions/projects are **best practices** that become **models** that can be used by other national and international bodies.





## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

**1 st LEVEL** Work in prison in expansion  
*We share and contaminate*

### Example 1

- Working with the **Court of Milan**, under a special **MOU**, signed to support children and their families when **affected by the imprisonment of a parent**, from arrest to sentencing and during detention.
- This is a **new model** of intervention configured by the judicial system and interaction with it.
- There is a **synthesis**, a **harmony of cooperation** and a win-win strategy with institutions that support children and families.





## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

**1 st LEVEL** Work in prison in expansion

*We share and contaminate*

### Example 2

- The **'Yellow Space System'** model has been created and adopted by Bambinisenzasbarre in **26 prisons** throughout Italy, with our **network of partners**, since now.





## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

**1 st LEVEL** Work in prison in expansion  
*We share and contaminate*

### Example 3



- **Game with Mum and Dad** in Italy since **2015**, in **109** Italian Prisons, by now.
- **COPE** is currently implementing it in several European countries since 2023.







## WHAT WE EXACTLY DO

### 2 nd LEVEL

Work in prison  
in expansion

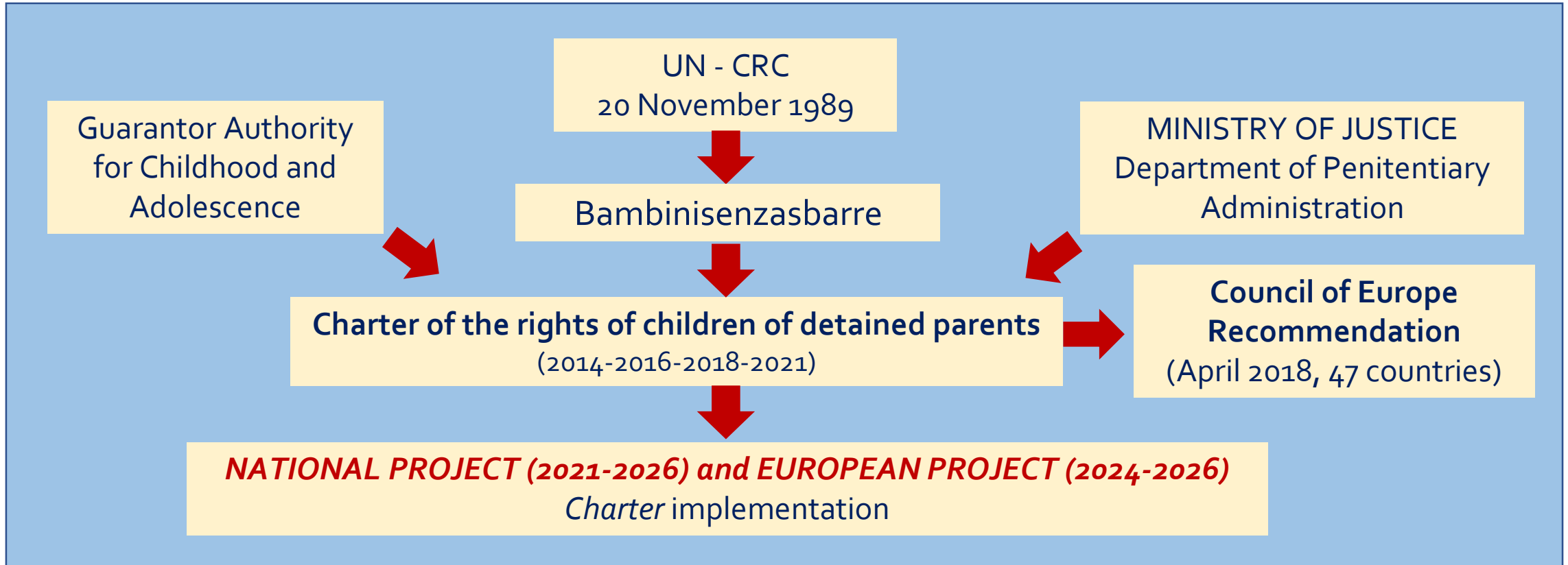
*We share and  
contaminate*





- Bambinisenzasbarre dialogues with the Institutions. A significant result is the **Charter of the Rights of Children of Prisoners' Parents**, signed (21.03.2014)

by the **Minister of Justice**, the **Authority for Children and Adolescents** and **Bambinisenzasbarre**, currently in force. The Charter is the first of its kind in Europe.



- The *Charter* formally recognises the **right of minors to the continuity of the affective bond with the detained parent**, in continuity with Articles 3 and 9 of the UN

the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The **Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)5** of the Council of Europe, took the Italian Charter as a **model**.





## A MODEL

### "Charter of the rights of the child of imprisoned parents"

The Italian *Charter* could become the **model** for replication in **Portugal, Romania and Belgium**, with the National Prison Services, the National Ombudsperson for Children and the patronage of **PC-CP**.

I am talking about our "**Child Charter**", an EU CERV funded **project** awaiting confirmation.

- About the *Charter* consulted by **Chile, Brazil, Peru, Argentina.**



## A MODEL

"Charter of the rights of the child of imprisoned parents"

**The National Monitoring Table** of the application of the *Charter of Rights of children of detained parents* together with the signatories of the Charter:

*Ministry of Justice, the Authority for Children and Adolescents and the National Ombudsman for Persons Deprived of their Liberty.*



# From the *Charter* to Bambinisenzasbarre's Actions

## **ACTION 1**

- *Yellow Space Dissemination*

### **ARTICLE 1**

Decisions concerning orders, judgments and execution of sentences.

### **ARTICLE 2**

Visits of juveniles within penal institutions and penal establishments for juveniles

### **ARTICLE 3**

Other types of relations with the detained parent

### **ARTICLE 5**

Information assistance and guidance

## **ACTION 2-3-4**

- *Network and dissemination*
  - *ICAM and external penal enforcement*
  - *Family Homes*

### **ARTICLE 1**

Decisions concerning orders, sentences and sentence execution

### **ARTICLE 5**

Information assistance and guidance

### **ARTICLE 7**

Transitional provisions

## **ACTION 5 and 6**

- *Talk groups and theatrical activity*

### **ARTICLE 2**

Visits of juveniles within penal establishments and penal institutions for juveniles

### **ARTICLE 3**

Other types of relations with the detained parent

### **ARTICLE 5**

Information assistance and guidance

## **ACTION 8**

- *Prison Police training*

### **ARTICLE 4**

Staff training



## A MODEL

A **Special Training Model** adopted by the Italian **Penitentiary Administration Department** (DAP) for prison officers and staff of the visit areas, where children and families come daily.

This special training has been carried out in full, concrete and effective **since 2017**.



**CHILDREN  
ARE NOT  
VISITORS –  
THEY ARE  
SONS AND  
DAUGHTERS.**



**THEY CARRY  
SHAME AND  
STIGMA –  
THOUGH  
THEY'VE DONE  
NOTHING  
WRONG.**



**A CHILD-  
FRIENDLY VISIT  
CAN  
STRENGTHEN  
FAMILY BONDS  
AND REDUCE  
TRAUMA.**



## A MODEL

The **Special Training Model** has become the **model** for the project '**Child Trust**' with **Poland, Croatia, France, ,** where the model will be replicated (Erasmus+ funded).

**FAMILY TIES  
MOTIVATE  
CHANGE  
AND REDUCE  
REPEAT  
OFFENSES.**



**PRISON  
STAFF  
PLAY A  
KEY ROLE.**



Based on the values of the CHILD TRUST project - training EU prison staff to support children visiting incarcerated parents with dignity and compassion.

Associated partners are **Penitentiary Administration Department** and the **Authority for Children and Adolescents.**

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# Thank you!

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